

# Nuts & Bolts DoD Fire Fighter Certification

## IMPORTANCE OF CERTIFICATION TO DUTY POSITIONS



Every DoD fire fighter must complete training that is prescribed for every duty position in DoD fire departments. This training is certified in the DoD Fire Fighter Certification System (FFCS). These certifications are prescribed in the GS-081 Qualification Standard and must be met **BEFORE** an individual **FILLS** a duty position **OR** **COMPETES** for a GS-081 duty position.

There are two exceptions:

1. There are no certification requirements for entry-level (below GS-5) firefighters. Entry-level fire fighters are hired without certifications and are allowed a maximum of one year to complete ALL REQUIRED certifications.
2. Fire fighters that were in duty positions on 31 May 2000 may continue to fill that duty position without additional certifications. However, they are considered fully qualified for that duty position **ONLY**. They may remain in that duty position indefinitely without certifications but may not fill any other duty position, even temporarily. They are not eligible to bump anyone during Reduction In Force (RIF) procedures and may not compete for promotion. Also, they may not transfer to lateral positions at the same or even lower grades, even within the same department. They are stuck where they are. These individuals are extremely vulnerable during any RIF procedures and are highly encouraged to obtain the required training and certification for their current duty position.

It is recommended that every fire fighter obtain training and certification for the duty positions they are otherwise eligible to compete for. For example, a GS-5 firefighter may compete for a GS-6 when time-in-grade requirements are satisfied. Therefore, they should achieve certification for GS-6 Firefighter before the position becomes vacant. Remember, **YOU MUST BE CERTIFIED BEFORE YOU CAN COMPETE!** You can't even be on the list of eligible candidates if you don't satisfy the certification requirements. Certification requirements carry the same weight as the time in grade requirements.

In the FFCS, there is reciprocity provision to recognize non-DoD training. However, to qualify for reciprocity this non-DoD training must be accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or the National Professional Qualifications System (NPQS), commonly called "Pro-Board." After completion of this non-DoD training, you may provide your certificate indicating either IFSAC or NPQS accreditation to the fire chief for submission to the FFCS Administration Center for reciprocity. While the reciprocity request is being progressed, you are **NOT** certified in the FFCS. You are not certified until you are listed in the DoD Certification Lookup System and/or receive your certification certificate from the FFCS Administration Center.

